



MONGOLIA

Strengthening the National Disaster Management System

Disaster Context

From 1999 to 2001, large areas of Mongolia experienced summer drought followed by severe winter weather with deep snows and extremely cold temperatures. Summer drought results in poor pasture conditions with short strands of grass. Severe winter conditions cover up the sparse summer grass with snow and ice. This condition, called *dzud* in the Mongolian language, makes it impossible for herders to graze their pastoral animals, resulting in large die-offs of animals and poverty for the most affected herders.

Many provinces experienced drought in the summer of 2001, affecting 70 percent of pastureland. In addition, the Mongolian Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology had predicted severe weather for the winter of 2001-2002. The result was a third consecutive year of *dzud* that severely impacted herders already struggling from the effects of the previous two years.

Project Titles

- Emergency Assistance to *Dzud* Areas (MON/00/302)
- Disaster Coordination in Mongolia (MON/01/302)
- Strengthening the Disaster Mitigation and Management System in Mongolia (MON/02/305)

Sectors

- Disaster coordination
- Institutional strengthening and building
- Capacity-building
- Emergency disaster response
- Partnership building
- Building a disaster information network

Funding

- MON/00/302: UNDP contributed \$64,000 from TRAC 1.1.3 funds
- MON/01/302: UNDP contributed \$100,000 from TRAC 1.1.3 funds, and the Government of Luxembourg contributed \$25,361
- MON/02/305: UNDP contributed \$100,000, the Government of Luxembourg contributed \$565,000, and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) contributed \$107,190

Partners

- Agencies of the UN Disaster Management Team
- National Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environmental Monitoring
- State Civil Defence Board
- Government of Luxembourg
- All line ministries
- Local governments

Programme Activities

In the summer of 2000, UNDP commissioned a study of lessons learned from the *dzud* of 1990-2000. The study was carried out in cooperation with the National Institute for Meteorology, Hydrology and Environmental Monitoring and the State Civil Defence Board. The study intended to assist the Government, donor community and civil society in better responding to winter disasters. After the *dzud* of 2000-2001, UNDP secured funding from the United Kingdom to develop a long-term project to strengthen the disaster management system in Mongolia.

As part of the project, the State Civil Defence Board and other representatives participated in a working visit to Viet Nam that focused on studying the experiences of Vietnamese disaster management institutions. The participants held discussions with Viet Nam's National

Committee for Search and Rescue, the Flood and Storm Emergency Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the team for Disaster Management Coordination, the Hydro-Meteorological Institute, and the local UNDP office. They also studied flood dykes and ditches of the Red River, coal mining systems of Halong Province, the port of Haiphong city, and the measures taken to decrease the effect of natural disasters in Ho Chi Minh City. The participants were also introduced to the legislation and regulations that govern the National Committee for Search and Rescue in Viet Nam.

National experts also participated in a UNDP-organised national conference on sustainable grassland management. They had an opportunity to share ideas and gain feedback from a diverse range of community, government, and international participants involved in a wide range of issues, including disaster mitigation and management.

The expected outcome of this project is a new Mongolian Disaster Mitigation and Management Agency that functions on national, regional, and international levels. This will be accomplished through institution building to assist the government in changing its disaster focus from military-based civil defence to civilian-led disaster mitigation and management.

National capacity will be enhanced by new technologies and training to change local military and civil defence-based search and rescue units into a new uniformed civilian service with local disaster response and grassroots disaster preparedness training teams. Regional capacity will be enhanced by improvements in equipment, training, and transport to better mobilize Mongolian disaster response teams.

International competence will be achieved through a disaster mitigation and management partnership between the government, donors, and NGOs, including cooperation, coordination, ranking of priorities, and allocating scarce resources for disaster mitigation and management at all government levels.

Additionally, there is a UNDP pilot project focusing on improving disaster damage assessment and relief reporting at local levels.